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PHYSICAL PRIDE.

THE world in general, comprising Writers as well as Readers, has been always extremely severe against Spiritual Pride; and this is not to be wondered at, because persons in the enjoyment of that attribute are for ever anathematising 'the world,' in the most unmeasured, though vague terms, as if they themselves had no connection with it, but belonged to some very superior Planet. Still, why should Spiritual Pride be so belaboured, while Pride of another sort, but at least equally offensive, escapes scot-free? This is an idea which forces itself upon my mind whenever I read one of those bitter rejoinders with which the *Saturday Review*, for instance, so often favours the so-called 'religious public.' What can a *Saturday Reviewer*, or indeed his readers, know about spiritual pride; and what harm did it ever do them? Such diatribes are a waste of power. Permit me to direct the attention of the conductors of that organ, whose aim has been ever to unshackle the social chain, to a more deserving object, and yet one which has sufficient respectability and good character to insure their antagonism. I refer to Physical Pride.

The glory of a young man is his strength; but that is no reason why he should be perpetually baring his arm to shew the public his *biceps*. Between the author of *Tom Brown* and the author of *Guy Livingstone*, there is a considerable gulf; but it is entirely filled up by works of fiction in praise of the muscles; and out of this literature has sprung a morbid craving after single-stick, dumb-bells, inordinate pedestrianism, washing as though a blackamoor should strive to make himself white, and ventilation to that extent that one might as well live in a wind-mill as in a house with all the latest improvements. Let us say a word or two in season against Limitless Washing—a matter which has become a serious nuisance among the higher classes, and even begins to threaten the lower. It has come to that pass, that one gentleman thinks another unclean who does not step from his bed every morning into a tub of ice-cold water. Cleanliness is a virtue, of course; but when

a man allows himself to be puffed up with the consciousness of using a shower-bath, or gives himself airs upon the strength of flesh-brushes, his self-righteousness has evidently passed beyond its due bounds. Why should this manly virtue be made the subject of boastful triumph? If I am beautiful (which I am), and take pains with my personal adornment, I don't remark how neatly my hair is parted to every acquaintance whom I happen to meet, and who, moreover, can see it for himself; if I cultivate my mind (which I do), I don't brag to my friends of how many encyclopædias I have swallowed lately. Why, then, should I exclaim: 'Ha, ha, I am warm; I am all in a glow; nothing is like a cold shower-bath.' Then (contemptuously): 'You don't take shower-baths; ah, I shouldn't think I was washed unless I took a shower-bath.' Now, I meet ten of these foolish physical fanatics for one who is the prey to spiritual pride.

Again, there is Pedestrianism—a very harmless and laudable pursuit, although, in my judgment, not much of a recreation. Any man has of course a right to walk his legs off if he pleases; but the privilege should surely cease with *his own* legs. The legislature has not suspended the law of *habeas corpus* in favour of the Alpine Club. No walker, be he ever so great a walker, has a right to take me captive, and bid me accompany him to the mountain-top whether I will or not; nor, if I refuse, may he address me in contumelious language. And yet, in point of fact, he does this. He cross-examines me as to how many miles I generally do in an hour (as though I were Captain Barclay); he affirms roughly that my pace is a snail's pace; he says I should step out *like a man*—as though my general mode of progression was upon all-fours. He treats me, in short, as though I were his Novice in unsatisfactory training for a match in Copenhagen Fields. I am continually meeting persons of this class—and they are most offensive; their numbers are increasing every day; the clubs are infested with them; it has become quite an advantage to be placed out of reach of their advice or solicitations by the possession of a wooden leg. You may talk of the pretensions of

the 'unco guid,' but nothing can exceed the overbearing arrogance of the physically proud. They do not walk for amusement, for they never exchange a word when they are about it, or look to right or left; the tread-mill would afford them every sensation for which they seek the Alps; nor do they walk for health. They walk for walking's sake—just as a glutton eats for eating's sake; walking is the be-all and the end-all of their lives; while nothing comes of it, except perspiration, and a self-conceit that would disgrace a dancing-master.

I have the highest respect for the Volunteer movement; but at the same time, I must confess that it is tarred with this same brush of physical pride. I have no objection whatever to any gentleman's adding what he pleases to his stature (let his original height have been what it may) by means of a shako and plume. Let him arm himself *cap-a-pie*, and be furnished with the latest weapons of precision; but why should he thereupon proceed to treat *me*—an unarmed and inoffensive fellow-countryman—with insolence and hauteur? Why does he sneer at me because I still wear the garb of peace? Doubtless it annoys him to know I take my sleep while he is rising to early drill. It must be irritating to see my nose flattened against the window of my snug sitting-room, with the fire in the background, while he marches by in the rain. But still, this is a free country. The conscription is not in force, I believe, in the metropolitan district. I am not obliged to carry a rifle because he does. I understand that the arm of the service to which he has the honour to belong is denominated the Volunteers. If that word has any meaning, I may remain where I am, dry and warm, without exposing myself to insult. But do I? Thanks to physical pride, I do not. Have you ever chanced to observe the manner in which a Volunteer behaves to any gentleman of his own corps who happens, through obesity or other sufficient cause, to be 'non-effective.' A crowd, whom age or infirmity has denuded of his head-feathers, meets with sympathy from his more fortunate companions, by comparison with the treatment of that non-effective Volunteer.

We are returning to the first stages of barbarism, when a man was valued according to his thews and sinews. Modern English life is become an arena; like gladiators, all men are oiling themselves from top to toe. This is, I think, objectionable. Some few of us, at least, should surely be permitted to remain unoiled spectators. There are other ways of pampering the body besides attiring it in Tyrian purple, and sprinkling it with Sabeian odours. 'Our young men,' a Russian philosopher informs me, 'do not devil ope* their physique except at billiards;' and if this despotism of the sinews is to go on at home, I shall emigrate to St Petersburg. We are getting to be less Christian than Muslemen. Let His Grace the Archbishop of York arrest this evil while he can, instead of wasting his energies against the Sensation Novelists, who never did him any harm; and who, I will also venture to add, never harmed anybody else. Then, indeed, would he add a new and striking feature—that of an archbishop aiming a blow at a social tyranny—to the materials which he so kindly recommended to their notice for 'making up' into an interesting

work of fiction: a curate, a sexton, and a Sunday school, being (as I understood him) its sole *dramatis personæ*; the wicked character of the tale alone excepted, who should be a 'conscientious dissenter.' But this leads us naturally back again to spiritual pride, and our present concern is with pride physical, about one of the ramifications of which I have yet to say one word. I allude to Ventilation.

Even more than for inordinate Washing is the present *furor* for a superabundance of Fresh Air within doors. You may take a horse to water—I mean, you may take a man to a shower-bath in the depth of January, but you can't make him pull the string; but if you ventilate your house according to the latest improvements, and he is fool enough to accept your invitation to come and see you, he is perforce exposed to every wind that blows there. I have known several what were once comfortable country-houses turned into winnowing-machines by these contrivances for health—all offsprings of the fiend of physical pride. It is under pretence of making me robust, powerful, muscular, that these appliances are sought out, which, on the contrary, never fail to give me catarrh and rheumatism. I am quite aware of their 'good intentions,' to which I cordially wish the position which the proverb assigns to them. But for my part, I would prefer to be a little less muscular and rather warmer; I would bate a few inches of the circumference of my calf, rather than have the window open for an equal space while the east wind is blowing; I would rather have my cheeks less like a peony, provided that my teeth did not chatter with the cold inside them. Now this always happens when I go to see my ventilated friends in the winter months. They assure me that their object is to attain an equable temperature throughout their residences; and I will bear them witness that this they have effected, for one room is as cold as another. They add, however, that this temperature is a warm fresh air.

'It is *fresh* enough, I have no doubt,' return I scornfully.

Then they produce, with vulgar triumph, a very complicated thermometer.

'My good friends,' say I, 'I would much rather that you brought me a charcoal stove. For though your arts should cause that instrument to stand at 180 degrees, I am none the less cold or out of a draught.'

There are draughts everywhere in those houses; currents of air such as you meet at the corners of the streets, and which tempt you to protect yourself with an umbrella. In the drawing-room of one of my ventilating friends, in particular, there is a draught that would blow an umbrella inside out. In the window there is a melancholy machine that moans like an Æolian harp swept by the icy fingers of the east wind. In the centre of the apartment are two curious pillars, gorgeously decorated without, but within, full of nothing but the bitterest winds: these, I understand, are modelled after those ventilators which, on board convict-ships and over-crowded emigrant vessels, give air to the hold; but—gracious goodness—my blood is not bilge-water, that it should require purification of this sort. To the uninitiated guest, these shifting columns, now shrunk and now distended, are objects of exceeding wonder; a too curious little boy-stranger once pricked one of them with a pin; and that drawing-room was transformed

* Slavonic for 'develop.'

upon the instant into a cavern of *Æolus*. The poor child was taken up in a whirlwind, and carried about the room like Mr Home, to the total destruction of the chandelier—at least that is what I heard. But the worst part of that windy drawing-room still remains to be spoken of: this is the fireplace itself. Yes; the one oasis where it might reasonably be imagined that warmth and shelter were to be found, is a noiseless winnowing-machine. Immediately beneath the mantel-piece, just where the small of your back comes, when you would warm yourself with your coat-tails under your arms, there rushes in a torrent of what my friend mendaciously asserts to be warm air. It is as cold as any air I know; I am afflicted with chronic lumbago from having incautiously exposed myself to it; for who would guess that at the very hearthstone of one's friend such an enemy was at work. 'O' a' the airts the wind can blaw,' surely from just under the mantel-piece is the most detestable. I could use much stronger language, without impropriety, considering the heinous character of this device; but I leave it to the Archbishop of York. He has given a subject to me, who am a sensation novelist; let me give him one in return. *Physical Pride*, my Lord Archbishop. That is a growing evil, which your pastoral staff has as yet, I believe, left untouched. I am not fond of ventilation, but I should like to see you ventilate that subject most uncommonly.

POUCETTE.

NEARLY seven years ago, I was walking hurriedly along the boulevards of Paris one winter's evening; it was Christmas-eve, and had been ushered in by thick fog and miserable drizzling rain, which provoked the inhabitants of the gay capital to complain loudly of the change which they fancied had taken place in the seasons of late years, whereby the detested *brouillard de Londres* had been introduced into their once clear, pure atmosphere. The weather was certainly most unseasonable, and took away almost entirely the small remnant of Christmas-like feeling, which an Englishman, with all his efforts, can manage to keep up in a foreign land. I had sat chatting with a friend over a cozy fire until dusk; and on leaving his house, neither a *remise* nor a *fiacre* was to be met with empty; so I made up my mind to a wet walk, and amused myself, as I went on, by observing the various groups of passengers, some of them suddenly benighted like myself, as they sped on their way along the crowded thoroughfare. The brilliant lamps hung from the shops threw a glare over each face as it flitted past, or paused to look in at the windows; and the noise of hammers resounded incessantly from the edge of the pavement, where workmen were busy erecting small wooden booths for the annual New-year's fair. Some were already completed, and their owners hovered about, ever and anon darting forth from behind their small counters, to pounce upon a likely customer, to whom they extolled the beauty and cheapness of their wares in tempting terms.

'Tenez, monsieur!' cries an old woman, whose

entire stock-in-trade consists of a few pairs of dolls' shoes of chocolate, displayed upon a tin tray, over which she carefully holds a weather-beaten umbrella—'two sous the pair, two sous!' 'Voilà, mesdames,' bawls a youth of ten, who, in London, would probably execute an unlimited number of catherine-wheels under the feet of Paterfamilias, as he crosses a crowded street; here he is carefully watching a basinful of water, in which float a number of glass ducks of the most brilliant and unnatural colours—'pour un sou;' and he holds up one tiny image between his finger and thumb, with a business-like air. 'Fi donc!' answers a sharp-visaged elderly woman, as she withdraws six of the ducks from their watery bed, and places them gently in a corner of her capacious basket, offering their owner at the same time four sous, which he accepts with the invariable 'Merci, madame,' and the polite Parisian bow; and depositing the coins in some deep recess of his huge trouser-pockets, he resumes his cry of 'Un sou, mesdames, pour un sou,' with unblushing mendacity. Just at the corner of the boulevard, where the Rue de la Paix joins it, stood a lively, wiry-looking little man, whose bows and cries were incessant, holding something in his outstretched hands, carefully wrapped in wet grass, which he entreats the bystanders to purchase. As I approach him, he uncovers it, and discloses a small tortoise, who waves his thin neck from side to side deprecatingly, and looks appealingly out of his dark eyes. 'Buy him, monsieur,' cries the little owner: 'he is my last; he will be your best friend for many years, and afterwards he will make an excellent soup!' A laugh from some of the passers-by rewarded this very naïve definition of a pet; and leaving the lively bustle of the boulevard, I turned down the Rue de la Paix, and into the dark-looking Rue Neuve St Augustin; a little way down which, I perceived a small knot of people gathered under the arched entrance to a *hôtel*.

There were not many—a few bloused workmen returning from their daily toil, two or three women, and the usual amount of active *gamins* darting about the outskirts; within, I could perceive the cocked-hat of the ever-watchful *sergent de ville*. Prompted by that gregarious instinct which leads most men towards crowds, I went up to it; and, by the help of a tolerably tall figure, I looked over the heads of the people into the centre, at a group, the first sight of whom I shall not soon forget. There, before me, on the cold pavement, now wet with wintry rain, lay a little, a very little girl, fainting. Her face, which was deadly pale, looked worn and pinched by want into that aged, hard look so touching to see in the very young, because it tells of a premature exposure to trial and care, if not of a struggle literally for life. Her jet-black hair, of which she had a profusion, lay unbound over her shoulders like a mantle. Her dress was an old black velvet frock, covered with spangles, with a piece of something red sewn on the skirt, and a scarlet bodice. Her neck and arms were bare; and

the gay dress, where it had been opened in front, shewed nothing underneath it but the poor thin body. Her legs were blue and mottled with cold; and the tiny feet were thrust into wooden *sabots*, one of which had dropped off, a world too wide for the little foot it was meant to protect. A kind-looking elderly woman knelt on the pavement, and supported the child's head in her arms, chafing her cold hands, and trying, by every means in her power, to restore animation; and wandering uneasily up and down beside them, was a curious-looking nondescript figure, such as one can rarely meet with out of Paris. It was a poodle—at least so its restless, bead-like, black eyes and muzzle betokened, and also a suspicious-looking tuft of hair, now visible, waving above its garments—but the animal presented a most ludicrous appearance, from being dressed up in a very exact imitation of the costume of a fine lady during the century of Louis le Grand. The brilliant eyes were surmounted by a cleverly-contrived wig, frizzed, powdered, and sparkling with mock-jewels; the body decked out in a cherry-coloured satin bodice, with a long peaked stomacher, trimmed with lace, and a stiff hoop, bell-like in shape, but, in proportion, far within the dimensions of a modern crinoline; even the high-heeled shoes of scarlet leather were not forgotten; and the strange anomaly between the animal and its disguise was irresistibly ludicrous. The dog was perfectly aware that something was going on—something strange, pitiful, and, what was more to the purpose, nearly concerning himself; and clever as he was, he could not yet see a way through his difficulties.

His misery was extreme; he pattered piteously up and down the space round the fainting child, and raised himself up anxiously on his hind-legs to peer into her little wan face, presenting thus a still more ludicrous aspect than before. With his wise doggish face peeping out curiously from the ridiculous human head-dress, he sniffed all over the various feet which encircled his precious mistress, suspiciously; and finally placing himself, still on his hind-legs, close by her side, he laid his head lovingly to her cheek, and uttered a low dismal howl, followed, after an instant's pause, by an impatient bark. The child stirred—roused apparently by the familiar sound—gasped for breath once or twice; and presently opening her eyes, she cried feebly: 'Mouton, où es tu donc?' He leaped up in an ecstasy, trying, in the height of his joy, to lick her face; but this was not to be: she pushed him away as roughly as the little feeble hand had strength to do.

'Ah, wicked dog, go away; you do mischief,' she said, fixing a pair of eyes as round and almost as black as his own upon the unfortunate animal. He dropped instantly, and with a subdued, sorrowful air, lay down, licking diligently, in his humility, the little foot from which the sabot had fallen: he had evidently proved that submission was the only plan to pursue with his imperious mistress. The girl was stronger now, and able to sit up with the help of the good woman's knee, and she drank off a cup of milk which the compassionate wife of the *conciierge* handed to her. 'Thanks, madame,' said the child with native politeness; 'I am better now. You are a good Christian,' she added, turning her head so as to look in the face of the woman who supported her.

'What are you called, my child?' asked her friend. 'Where do you live?'

'Antoinette Elizabeth is my baptismal name,' answered the child, with odd gravity; 'but I am generally called *Poucette*, because, you see, I am small;' and a faint tinge of colour came into her pale cheeks.

No wonder the name was bestowed upon her, for we could see that she was small—very small; and, from the diminutive size of her limbs, she seemed likely to remain so till the end of her days.

'Will you go home now?' asked the woman, after a moment's pause.

'No, not just yet,' said the tiny being. 'I have had no supper. I shall go to Emile, but Mouton may go home.—Go!' she cried imperiously to the dog, as she swiftly slid off the marvellous dress and wig, out of which casing Mouton came forth an ordinary-looking and decidedly dirty poodle. He hesitated for an instant, when she raised her little clenched fist, and shook it fiercely at him, repeating 'Go!' in louder tones. He wagged his tail deprecatingly, licked his black lips, looked imploringly at her out of his loving eyes, and seemed to beg permission to remain with her; but in vain; then, seeing her endeavour to rise, he turned, fled up the street with the swiftness of a bird, and disappeared round the corner. His mistress, in the meantime, folded up the dog's finery carefully, and deposited it inside her own poor garments; then, after an instant's pause, she rose to her feet, and looked round at us. She was well named *Poucette*: in stature she did not exceed a child of four years old; but she was perfectly made, and the limbs were in excellent proportion with the tiny stature, only her face shewed age. There was a keen, worldly look about the mouth, with its thin scarlet lips; and a vindictive expression shining in the bold black eyes—altogether a hard-looking face, not at all attractive in its character; and yet I felt myself drawn to the poor child.

She was evidently half-starved, fighting her own hard battle with the world, and keeping her struggle as much to herself as she could; and when scanning curiously over the faces surrounding her, her eyes rested on mine, I stepped forward, and offered her a five-franc piece. To my surprise, she threw the money on the pavement with the bitterest scorn. 'I don't want money,' she shrieked passionately.—'I want my supper. Go away, *canaille!*' I stooped down towards her, and took her hand. 'Come with me,' I said to her, 'and you shall have some supper. I live close by.' She stood on tip-toe even then, and peered into my face with her sharp eyes. Apparently, however, a short inspection satisfied her, for she said softly: 'Thank you,' and tried to hold my hand. Finding it too much for her small grasp, she clung to my trousers with one hand, and with the other she waved off the wondering bystanders with a most majestic air. I offered payment for the milk, which the good woman civilly refused; and then I sent for a *fiacre* in which to get to my lodgings in the Rue Rivoli, shrinking, I must confess, from the idea of the ridiculous figure I should cut walking along the streets with this absurd though unfortunate creature. Presently the *conciierge* arrived with one, and we stepped in, *Poucette* entering majestically first. I gave the word, and we

started. Hardly had we turned out of the street, when the impulsive child beside me seized me with both hands, and in an ecstasy of gratitude thanked me with streaming eyes for what I was doing for her. 'I am starving,' she sobbed—I fainted from hunger. I have been dancing on the boulevards all day with Mouton, who is hungry, too, poor fellow, for he only got one small bit of bread which a little gentleman gave him this morning.'

'Why did you not take the money, then?' I asked. 'You might have bought food for yourself and Mouton.'

'I did not want money,' said the girl proudly—'I don't beg.'

'But you say you are hungry.'

'That is nothing. I never beg; I dance; and to-night, when I have had some supper, I shall dance for you, and you shall see;' drawing herself up.

At this speech, I hesitated. What, in the world, had I to do with a dancing-girl in my quiet bachelor-rooms? Did she intend taking them by storm, and quartering herself upon me, whether I liked it or not? The question was a difficult one; but yet, when I looked down at the tiny figure, with its poor, weebegone face, so thin and weary-looking, its utter weakness and dependence, I felt that, come what might, I could not act otherwise than I was doing. 'There, go upstairs, *au troisième*,' said I to my charge, as the fiacre stopped, and we got out; when lo! from behind a large stone close by the entrance to the *porte-cochère*, the black round eyes of Mouton glanced furtively out upon us. His behaviour was exceedingly reserved; he durst not even wag his tail for fear of giving offence, but he glanced at me in the meekest, humblest entreaty ever dog did. 'Don't send him away,' I said to Poucette: 'take him upstairs with you; I wish him to remain.'

She made no reply, but snapped her fingers encouragingly at him, and he followed her closely, as she walked upstairs. I paused a moment with the concierge, to ask her to provide some dinner for my unexpected guests; and then mounted the stairs after them. I found Antoinette Elizabeth and her faithful follower seated at my door, gravely awaiting my arrival. Mouton recognised me as a friend, and faintly wagged his tail; evidently he was careful, in the presence of his mistress, upon whom he bestowed his favours. We entered my room, all three of us; and presently the dinner arrived, and was done ample justice to. Poucette ate heartily, but not ravenously; and after the meal was over, we drew our chairs round the fire, and sat eating walnuts. She asked then, with more timidity than she had yet shewn: 'When shall we have the honour of dancing for monsieur?' raising her large black eyes, which had lost their fierce look, to my face.

'Not just yet, Poucette,' I replied. 'Tell me something about yourself first, and eat more walnuts.'

She looked up sharply at this, as if to say, what business is that of yours; then away into the fire, which was evidently a novel luxury to her; and finally her glance rested on Mouton, who, having devoured every superfluous piece of meat, and gnawed the only bone at table, had now stretched himself on the hearth-rug, and slumbered peacefully at her feet. 'Monsieur is very good,' she said

presently, with a sigh, still with her eyes fixed on Mouton. 'My history is nothing very great. I am not a Parisian; my father was a Norman.'

'Is he alive now?' I asked, as she paused here.

'I don't know about that,' she answered haughtily. 'He was a wicked man. Monsieur understands me?' she said questioningly, with a piercing look.

'Yes, poor child. And your mother, what of her?'

'She is an angel,' faltered the girl. 'She went up to heaven last Christmas;' and tears filled her eyes as she said it.

'How have you lived since?'

'Oh, that was at Marseille; and I came on here with Mouton.—We dance,' she continued in a firmer voice; 'we go out with a man called Emile, who plays the organ very well; and he has another dog like Mouton, only not at all clever: the stupid creature can only hold a basket in his mouth, and beg for souse; he has no talent.' She shrugged her shoulders, and continued: 'We live with Emile and his wife; they are not always kind to me; but I love Jean.'

'Who is this Jean?' I asked.

'Ah! he is a poor boy,' she replied; the whole expression of her countenance softening at his name, and her sallow cheeks crimsoning with a tender flush. 'He is lame; he cannot walk; and is pulled about in a little carriage; but he does not like to beg, so Emile will not take him out with us.'

'Is Emile his father?' I asked.

'No, monsieur; his father is dead, but his mother is Emile's wife. I take care of Jean myself.'

'Are they good to you?'

'Yes, pretty well. You see I dance for them, and people give more money because I am there; and then Mouton is so clever; one does not easily meet with a dog like that, who will stand on his hind-legs for an hour together, and dance as he does. Look at his dress, too;' and she pulled out of the bosom of her frock Mouton's paraphernalia, and displayed it with evident pride. 'In my opinion, now, there is no such dress as that for a dog in all Paris,' she said, as she held it up admiringly to the lamp. 'Jean made those shoes; aren't they droll? And the wig, look, that is superb!'

'Who made the wig?' I asked.

'Ah! it was a little boy, who is apprenticed to a wigmaker,' she answered. 'Monsieur, it was a bargain between us; he wanted something from me, and—and I said I would give it him if he made a wig for Mouton; and this is the wig. He is not bad himself, that little boy; but he is not at all so good as Jean.'

'How old is Jean?' I asked.

'He is twelve years old, monsieur.'

'And you?'

'I am ten,' she replied, with a little sigh and a blush. 'But I may grow still, may I not?' she asked timidly, looking up into my face so pathetically, that I had hardly sufficient gravity to answer: 'Yes, of course; you will doubtless grow for a long time yet.'

'Ah! that is exactly what Jean says,' she exclaimed gaily; then added in a lower voice: 'Jean says he likes little people best; but you see he may say that because he likes me.'

I answered nothing to this; and presently she roused herself from a little reverie, and said:

'Now we shall dance for you, because it gets late, and I must go home.'

'If you like to remain here all night,' I said, 'the wife of the concierge will let you sleep in a little room off theirs, downstairs; and when you have had some breakfast, you can then return.'

'No, no,' she repeated sharply; 'I will not sleep here; I go home to Jean.'

'Will Emile be glad to see you?'

'That depends if he is cross; he will beat me for staying so long; but it does not matter; I wished to stay, and I liked my dinner, and this warm fire' (she looked wistfully at it). 'Monsieur is very good. Come, Mouton, my friend; wake yourself up.'

The dog rose, shook himself, and patiently allowed himself to be dressed once more. He took an unfair advantage of his mistress, however, when she knelt down to put on his shoes, and licked her face. 'Ah, *cochon*, how often must I box your ears for that trick!' she said, as she gave him a tap on the side of his head, for the liberty. 'Come now, walk along.' The dog paced soberly towards the door on his hind-legs.—'That is the *ancien régime*,' she explained to me.—'Now, Mouton, shew us how people walk at the present day.' The dog stopped, and at once imitated the short, mincing step of a Parisian belle, shaking his hoop from side to side in most ludicrous fashion; and as he reached his mistress, he dropped a little awkward quick courtesy.

'That is well,' she said. 'Now sing for us like Madame G——,' naming a famous opera-singer, whose fame was then at its height, and she laid a light piece of music-paper across his paws. The dog looked closely down on the paper for an instant, licked his lips, looked round at an imaginary audience, and then throwing back his head, and fixing his black eyes on the ceiling, he uttered a howl so shrill and piercing that I stopped my ears; he then ceased for an instant, looked at his music attentively, then at his audience, and again uttered that ear-piercing howl. 'That is enough,' said Poucette: 'how to the company.' The dog rose and sank with the grace almost of the prima donna herself.

'Now, Mouton, we are going to dance;' and taking the animal by its paw, she put the other arm round it, and the two whirled round in a waltz, keeping admirable time to a tune which Poucette whistled. 'Now read a book, and rest yourself whilst I dance;' and again the piece of music was laid on Mouton's paws, and he bent his eyes on it apparently with the most devoted attention, whilst Poucette slipped off her heavy sabots, and with naked feet thrust into a pair of old satin slippers, which she produced from some pocket in her dress, she executed a sort of fancy dance, half Cachuca, half Bolero, throwing herself into pretty, graceful attitudes, with a step as light as a fairy's; then, as she approached Mouton in the figure, she lifted the music, and taking him by one paw, she led him forward to the front of my chair on the points of her toes, the two courtesying nearly to the ground, when Mouton affectionately kissed his mistress on the cheek.

'There, it is over now,' said Poucette; 'that is all.—He does not know the minuet perfectly yet; next week, perhaps, we shall try it for the *Jour de l'An*.'

'Well done!' I exclaimed, and clapped my hands.

'He is a famous dog; and you—you dance beautifully.'

Mouton came to be patted and made much of; and his mistress now announced her intention of going home at once. Finding it useless to try and induce her to stay, I offered to go with her myself, and see her safely through the still crowded streets; but this she firmly declined.

'No, not to-night,' she said. 'You may come to-morrow, if you will be so kind, but not to-night. You have been very good, monsieur; I am not ungrateful. You may come to-morrow; Rue —, No. —, quite close to Notre Dame.' She took my hand, raised it to her lips, courtesied, and was gone.

I followed her downstairs, and watched the little figure hurrying along with a firm step, upright as a dart, the light from the gas-lamps falling now and then on the spangles of her dress, and making them twinkle for an instant; and the dark outline of Mouton following closely behind her, under the shadow of the houses. Presently they crossed the street, and disappeared in the distance; and I turned and walked upstairs to my cozy well-lighted room, to think over the strange life of a street dancing-girl.

After this, I made inquiries about Poucette in the part of the town where she lived, and visited the man Emile and his wife often. Here I found the cripple boy Jean, to whom Poucette clung with a tenacity of affection that was touching to witness. He had had a fall as an infant, so his mother said, and never had walked; but his fingers were skilful in making toys, baskets, and small rush-mats, which Poucette sold during her daily rounds. To him she devoted her affections, her life, with a steady ardour not often met with at her age. Towards others, she was always grave, distant, often haughty and bitter in her expressions of anger, but to him never. However tired she might return home after dancing or selling his wares on the boulevard, she never shewed him that she was so; if he wished to go out, she drew him in a rude wooden sledge to the gardens of the Luxembourg; and the two would sit there by the hour together on Sundays, criticising the passers-by as they walked about in their gay dresses. At night, if the invalid was restless or in pain, Poucette sat beside him, sometimes till day dawned, with a sympathising cheerful face, ready to attend upon every want. There she shone; but take away Jean out of her world, and Poucette stood forth a vixen. Madame Emile, who was herself somewhat of a shrew, vowed that if it were not that she and Jean were so bound up together, and nothing could separate them, she must have sent away Poucette long ago. 'No one could endure her temper, monsieur,' she would declare to me; and when she began upon this subject, madame waxed eloquent. 'She is a girl such as there is not besides in Paris. For Jean, she will give up dress, company, the theatre, everything; but except for him, she would not go one step out of her way to be made an empress. It is not natural that. After she first came here, we had a great deal of trouble with her, and Emile beat her well; but then she would run away in a rage, and come back again during the night, for fear Jean should want something. Now, we are more used to her, and we let her have her own way pretty much.'

Jean I could get nothing out of except a

'Bonjour, monsieur' at entering and on leaving his house. He sat silently plaiting his mats or carving toys with his long fingers, looking as if he neither heard nor understood what we were talking about; but he carefully repeated all the conversation afterwards to his friend Poucette, for she told me so often when we were together. She used to come and see me at my rooms, when it was wet, or business was slack; and I succeeded in finding a customer for her wares in a toy-merchant, who promised to take all Jean's work at a reasonable price, and was liberal towards the two children. Poucette was thus able to give up her public dancing, and stay more at home; and the toyman's daughter taught her dainty embroidery, in which her skilful fingers soon excelled. She tamed down wonderfully that winter, and even made some efforts to learn reading, as I suggested to her what a source of pleasure it would be to Jean, whose thirst for hearing stories related was intense, if he could read them for himself. But she was very slow at this; the letters proved a heavy task to learn, and when we came to spelling, I often despaired; still she toiled on, and when I left Paris in May, she could read a very little.

Six months passed, and again I turned my steps to my old winter-quarters. The summer and autumn had been spent by me partly in England, partly in Switzerland. My protégée was unable to write, and I had heard nothing of her since I left Paris. I had not returned there longer than a week, when I set off into the Cité, to discover again my little pupil. It was much the same sort of a day as that on which we had first met; cold, dank, misty rain kept falling, and the streets were wet and sloppy. The part of the town where Poucette lived was wretchedly poor, dingy, and dirty-looking, especially in such weather as I now visited it, and the reputed haunt of thieves and evil-doers of various kinds. I picked my way along narrow ill-paved streets, with the gutters in the middle, and at last I reached her old abode. There was no one stirring about; but the door was ajar. I pushed it open, and walked in. The dwelling had once been some nobleman's hotel in bygone days, and its rooms were large and lofty, and at present each inhabited by different poor families. Emile's was on the ground-floor—a long room, formerly used either as a guard-room or for playing billiards in. It had one large window, opening in the centre, and crossed outside with thick iron bars, which partially excluded the light. I was confused on entering from the outer air, and at first could only perceive that the room was filled with a crowd of people, of various ages and sexes, but all of the lowest order, some sitting, some standing. A woman came forth to meet me, whom I recognised as Madame Emile, sobbing and holding her apron to her eyes. 'Ah, mon Dieu, mon Dieu!' she whispered, as she looked at me and clasped her hands piteously; 'the poor Poucette; how hard it is.—Monsieur, you are welcome; but this is a sorrowful time; she is much hurt.' She led me gently through the various groups, all sorrowfully silent, towards a low pallet, at the head of the room, where, crushed, bleeding, and now insensible from pain, lay the form of poor Poucette. 'What is this?' I asked in a whisper. 'How did it happen?'

'Ah, this was a vile remise,' eagerly answered a dozen voices. 'She was returning home yesterday

from selling the mats, and the driver was drunk. She fell in crossing, and he did not see her. The wheel crushed her poor chest. Ah, she will die, the unhappy child!'

'Where is Jean?' I asked.

His mother silently pointed out what looked like a bundle of clothes huddled up in the bed beside the dying child. She was dying, my poor Poucette. One of the kind-hearted surgeons from the Hôpital had been to see her early that morning, and pronounced that besides the blow on her chest, which was of itself a dangerous one, severe internal injuries had taken place, which must end her life in a few hours. Poor Poucette! I seated myself by the little couch in the dark room, which was so soon to be filled by the presence of death, and presently the surgeon came again. All eyes turned anxiously towards him as he walked to the bed, and kneeling down beside it, carefully examined the poor little sufferer, whose only sign of consciousness was a groan of anguish now and then.

'Can nothing be done for her?' I asked, as he rose to his feet and stood by the bed, looking pityingly down at the two children.

'Nothing whatever,' he said, with a mournful shake of his head. 'She will not last through the night.'

'Does she suffer?' I asked.

'Acutely, but it will not be for long. Mortification is setting in rapidly.' He paused, then added: 'She will probably regain consciousness at the last;' and left the room.

Slowly the weary hours glided on; gradually the moans became weaker, and the pulse quick and fitful. Suddenly she opened her eyes, and looked at me inquiringly; then her eyes fell on Jean, who lay at her side, and uttered an exclamation of joy. 'I am not in pain now,' she said faintly; 'that is over.—Ah, my good monsieur, you said you would return. I am glad.'

'I am grieved to find you thus, Poucette,' I whispered. 'Can I do anything for you?'

'Perhaps you would like to have Mouton,' she said calmly, as if thinking aloud.

'I will keep him, if you like it,' I replied. 'Is there anything else you would like?'

'Only Jean, dear Jean,' and her soft dark eyes were fixed timidly yet imploringly on my face.

'I will take care of Jean.'

'The good God reward you, my kind monsieur! That is all that I want.—Adieu, madame. Adieu, my good friends. It is over.' Just then, Mouton raised himself on his hind-legs by the bed, and peered anxiously into her face. She put out her little right hand, and gently patted his head; then, with a last effort, she turned round from us, and flung one tiny arm round the crippled boy at her side. 'Je t'aime toujours,' she whispered, as she bent over and kissed him. It was a last effort. A slight shiver passed over the little figure; one long-drawn sigh escaped the white lips. Poucette was gone to her mother; the wanderer had been taken home; the desolate one was comforted!

My tale is ended, except to say that, from that evening, Mouton has been my inseparable companion. He is by no means, however, as complaisant to me as he was to his mistress; on the contrary, Mouton, like many other *nouveaux riches*, is rather a spoiled dog, and the tyrant of my small household. Jean became a basket-maker,

and it is not improbable that my fair readers may have in their possession some of the productions of his skilful fingers. Such was the fruit of my Christmas-eve in Paris six years ago. I have never spent one there since.

A JET EXHIBITION.

THE good folks of Whitby have been holding an exhibition of articles of use and ornament made of jet. A sensible thing for them to do, seeing that the town has acquired quite a reputation for this manufacture, conducted nowhere else on an equally large and complete scale.

Everybody knows that jet is very black and very brilliant; but everybody does not know whether it is coal, something like coal, or not coal at all. Indeed, men of science have not yet quite made up their minds on this point. The Whitby jet is found in a thick bed of lignite, in the upper lias marls near the coast. In this respect, it differs from the jet found and worked in Spain and France, which occurs in irregular veins in the lower marls of the chalk series. It has been customary, in view of the fact, that jet occurs near Whitby in a bed of lignite, to regard jet itself as a lignite, or kind of wood, partially and imperfectly converted into coal. There have, however, been fossils found imbedded in some of the specimens; and hence a theory has been put forth that jet is a species of petroleum. Some of the bits picked up or dug out, along the coast of Yorkshire, are in the form of branches, with a semblance of woody structure; and this is considered to afford support for the lignite theory. Nearly all the specimens have a conchoidal or shelly fracture; they are soft and brittle; their specific gravity is only a little greater than that of water; and they have a brilliant and resinous lustre. It is too good and valuable to be used as fuel; but when burned, it emits a greenish flame and a strong bituminous smell, and leaves a yellowish ash. It certainly seems, in many of its qualities, to behave like a kind of superior, brilliant, hard pitch.

It has not been left to our own day to devise modes of applying jet for purposes of ornament. The substance was known long, long ago. Jet ornaments must have been known to the ancient Britons, and to their conquerors, the Romans; seeing that numerous specimens of them have been found in tombs and other burying-places. Camden, translating from an old *Treatise of Jewels*, says:

Jet stone almost a gemm, the Libyans find;
But fruitful Britain sends a wondrous kind;
'Tis black and shining, smooth, and even light,
'Twill draw up straws if rubbed till hot and bright.
Oyl makes it cold, but water gives it heat.

This curious poetical bit of science comprises a notification of the undoubted fact, that jet is a good electrical agent, fitted to 'draw up straws' when exposed to friction. Drayton has also a bit of versification to bestow on the subject:

The rocks by Moulgrave, too, my glories further to set,
Out of their crayed cleaves can give you perfect jet.

This 'Moulgrave' refers to Mulgrave Castle and Cliffs, a little northward of Whitby. As jet is found for many miles along the coast, as well as some distance inland, it is not surprising that the substance has been worked up into ornaments in that town ever since the days of Queen Elizabeth.

There is among the Harleian Manuscripts an account of the *Voyage of Don Manoel Gonzales, a Portuguese merchant, to Great Britain, in 1730*. The Don visited Yorkshire, and speaks of 'jet, geat, or black amber' as being found at various places in the county, 'in the chinks and clefts of the rocks.' 'It is,' he adds, 'naturally of a reddish or rusty colour, but when polished, it is a shining black.'

The working of jet is a peculiar art, calling for much delicacy and tact on the part of the workman. This is owing to the brittle nature of the substance, which leads to fracture under anything less than very delicate handling. In this respect it bears some resemblance to cannel-coal, the finer specimens of which are good enough to be wrought up into ornament. As jet cannot be mechanically built up by welding, like iron, nor by pressure in moulds, like black-lead, nor by melting, like metals generally, nor by cementing, like wood and various other substances, there are no means for combining chips and fragments into masses of workable size; and therefore the workman takes great care of such pieces as are both large in size and good in quality. So differently is jet regarded from any kind of coal as a marketable product, that it is sold by the pound, and at as high prices, too, as ten to eighteen shillings per pound, according to the size of the specimens. The probability is, that the manufacturer does not first determine what he will make, and then seek for a piece of suitable size, but that he looks at his specimens first, and then decides into what kind of ornament each could be transformed. The working processes, however, are pretty much the same, whether the specimens be large or small. In the first place, the jet is sawed carefully into a block or piece approximating to the proper shape. Then any required device is marked upon it—be it scrolls, leaves, flowers, diamonds, circles, crosses, or what not—with a steel point—a kind of engraving, just to guide the subsequent processes. The cutting is then effected mostly by knives, chisels, gouges, and other tools, as a carver cuts wood; it looks easy enough, for the jet yields readily to the cutting edge; but it requires very careful manipulation to prevent fracture and splitting, to which the substance is liable. After this carving, the jet is ground. It is applied to the edges of small revolving wheels, of stone or other substances, which wear it away very rapidly. Whoever has seen a crystal glass-cutter at work, making the devices on a wine-glass or decanter, will readily understand how the grinding away of the jet is effected. Then the workman substitutes wheels covered on the edges with list, and this gives a polish to the ground surface, at the same time changing the brownish tint to a brilliant black. Pieces of list, applied in other ways than as a covering for wheel-edges, carry the polish into all the little nooks and corners of the ornaments. A light rubber, touched with rouge, finishes the operation. When armlets, bracelets, and similar articles are made, consisting of many pieces disposed in a ring or circle, the pieces of jet are first cemented together, to keep them in their relative positions while being cut and polished; they are then separated, and are drilled with holes to receive the elastic threads or cords which are permanently to retain them in their places.

This is by no means an unimportant manufacture, for there are several establishments in Whitby

maintained wholly by it, and five or six hundred men and boys employed in the working. The men earn from fifteen to twenty shillings a week, the boys from three to five shillings. Nay, they have even got a *Jet Men's Arms* among the public-houses in Church Street. We have said that there are no available means for combining several pieces of jet to make one larger piece suitable for working; hence it follows that many small pieces, fragments, chips, and dust are wasted, and that the workman is prized most who can reduce this waste to a minimum. The manufacturers group together jet with polished stones or shells into the same ornament, especially ammonite or snake-stone, found largely in the neighbouring cliffs. The articles thus made up of the 'finest Whitby jet,' as the trade love to call it, are mostly vases, chains, rings, seals, brooches, taper-stands, and chimney-ornaments, with now and then an ambitious attempt at a small bust or a statuette. When Mr Robert Hunt tells us that the value of Whitby jet, materials and workmanship included, reaches something like twenty thousand pounds a year, we shall admit that it forms a respectable item in the trade of a town.

The best kinds of cannel-coal are so much like jet in some of its properties, that the one substance is occasionally mistaken for the other. But the resemblance soon gives way after a little scrutiny. Cannel-coal forms whole strata; whereas jet is found only in small pieces, more or less resembling branches or twigs. Cannel-coal splits every way; but jet has one particular direction of easy fracture. Cannel-coal is sold by the ton, for gas-making, only choice specimens here and there being selected for ornamental purposes; whereas jet is too valuable for fuel, and is purchased only by the pound. Cannel-coal, however, is obtainable in larger pieces than jet; and hence there have been occasional instances of somewhat pretentious works executed in it. At the Great Exhibition, for example, there was a garden-seat of cannel-coal, made from a design by Mr Grüner; the coal was of the kind called *parrot-coal*, from the Fifeshire coal-field. The Newcastle coal-field yielded pieces from which were made a model of the Durham monument, and a wine-cooler. The Wigan coal-field, in like manner, furnished pieces of cannel-coal pure enough to make into chess-men, snuff-boxes, and other articles. The jet ornaments, chiefly from Whitby, at the same Exhibition, were such as are usually worn in mourning in this country; and for crosses, beads, rosaries, &c., in Roman Catholic countries. The Spanish jet of Asturias, worked up into ornaments at Oviedo, is sold at a much lower price than Whitby jet.

It was a good idea of the Whitby Mechanics' Institute to get up an Exhibition of Jet Ornaments, seeing that it made the beauty of the substance known to a large number of persons, and at the same time encouraged the workmen to cultivate taste in the designs and manipulation of the substance. The first Exhibition was held during the visitors' season of 1863; and the second on the 30th and 31st of August 1864. The place of meeting was St Hilda's Hall. The Mechanics' Institute offered prizes for the most tasteful productions in jet; the Marquis and Marchioness of Normanby (on whose estates most of the jet is found), and the member for the borough, offered other prizes; and the Society of Arts also came

forward liberally. The workmen and the boys, in the employ of the several manufacturers, set at it with good spirit—for the prizes were to be given to those who actually did the work, and not to the employers or sellers; a distinction not always sufficiently held in view by the holders of exhibitions. The people came, paid, and admired, and all agreed that the Exhibition was a very happy one. Everybody seems to have been pleased. The prize-holders were of course elated; the visitors paid the admission-fee willingly; the Mechanics' Institute more than covered its expenses by the receipts, and the honourable member for the borough purchased all the prize specimens, and presented them to the Museum of the Institute.

LADY FLAVIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYNN'S WIFE.'

CHAPTER IV.—BACK TO ENGLAND.

BRAND ROYSTON, Esquire, J.P. and D.P.L., of Royston Hall, in the county of York, had been a notable person in his day. That he was of a good old family, allied to the most ancient names in Yorkshire, was what his bitterest enemies, and he had many, never denied. Indeed, from time immemorial, the Roystons of Royston Hall had eaten of the fat and drunk of the strong—rich squires and men of worship in their native county. That was all over now. Royston Hall, and its eleven thousand acres of good arable and pasture land, had been brought to the hammer, and knocked down to a Leeds clothier. The heir of the old name and the old place—he whose birth had been hailed by bell-ringing in three parishes, and whose coming of age had been celebrated with roasting of oxen, broaching of beer-casks, and huzzaing of tenantry, was smoking cheap tobacco, wearing old coats, and leading a hide-and-seek life in France, on the little income that his wife's father, a commercial man of some prudence, had prevailed on him to settle on her for her separate use.

Such was the climax to which dogs, horses, chicken-hazard, blind-hokey, and racing of maggots across polished dinner-tables for heavy bets, had conducted Brand Royston, only son and heir of Thomas Royston and Lady Caroline his wife, both as honest and stupid folks as ever lived and died respected and worthy of respect. Not that the new and last squire of the Royston line was a fool. There were not a few who were ready to proclaim him the customary antithesis of fools. He had brains and daring too, and plenty of the north-country father-wit, but his recklessness knew no bounds. Brand Royston, as the knowing ones said, with an ominous shake of the head, was 'at all in the ring.' He was known on every race-course in England, and at every gaming-table. He rode steeple-chases, entered his horses for every conceivable stake, hedging, backing his opinion, betting secretly and openly, and having a finger in many and many a racing-pie of dubious quality. Had he stuck to the turf, people said he might 'still have done,' though his name began

to be mixed up with ugly stories. But he was equally ready to risk his thousands on fighting-men and fighting-cocks, on rat-killing terriers, on snarling mastiffs in a pit, on his own skill in a pigeon-match. Cards and dice, betting-books and extravagant living, such were the demons to which he sold himself; and they used him as they did many another Faust in top-boots and Belcher cravat, buoying him up for a while, to sink him the more hopelessly at last.

Mr Royston fled from England with the bailiffs at his heels, and his name was in the list of outlaws proclaimed by the sheriff of Middlesex. The crash had come, and the game was up. He was almost as poor in reputation as in purse. Very queer tales were told of his turf-mancuvres; of young fellows who had been proud to keep company with so celebrated a man, and had paid dearly for the honour of Rattling Brand Royston's acquaintance; of gallant race-horses 'nobbled' on the night before the running, of poisoned beans, of pails of water administered just before the bell rang for saddling in the paddock on the course, and of jockeys bribed to 'pull' the favourite back at the crisis of victory. But if there were truth in these tales, at any rate it must have been diamond cut diamond, and Mr Royston had met with wiliier or cooler rogues than himself, for others grew rich, and he poor as Job. Hounds, horses, acres, and mansion all went from the prodigal, and the haunts of his prosperity knew him no more.

With all Brand Royston's faults, he was hospitably inclined, and his wife was very glad to welcome Lady Flavia beneath the shelter of her rickety roof-tree. Mrs Royston, as many English residents at Brussels, Tours, Dinan, and other resorts of British exiles, had been pleased to remark, was her husband's guardian angel. But she was a very timorous guardian angel, and weak on the wing withal, and could not save a spendthrift so obstinately bent on ruining himself as the ex-squire. It was due to her, however, that the ruin was not more complete. The family had nothing to live on, excepting the little sum in consols that had been settled on the wife at her marriage, and which produced a smaller annual income than Royston had once paid as a salary to his stud-groom. Elizabeth Burt had brought her husband a larger dowry than this, the only remaining fraction of it. Forty thousand pounds of hers had gone the way that all guineas went in Brand's desperate hands; but Mrs Royston never repined, never would listen to a word against the husband who had brought her down from affluence to poverty. She was, as has been said, of a commercial family, and her father, an honest alderman of York, had thought it a proud promotion for a child of his to marry the heir of Royston. He lived to pay his son-in-law's debts once or twice, but died before the final breakdown of the household. Mrs Royston accepted her fallen fortunes very philosophically. It was due to her that the bills were so regularly paid. She managed to spread out the meagre income in a

surprising manner, made one franc do duty for two, bargained and haggled over her marketing, and took care, somehow, that her Brand should always have buttons on his shirts, and a savoury dish or two at dinner-time.

Mrs Royston was really a very good wife, and a well-intentioned woman, although her weak will could never cope with the headstrong resolution of her husband. Of him she stood in great awe. She cowered before him, spaniel-like, when he was angry, which was not seldom. Often she would let her work drop on her knee, needle, thread, and all, when she heard the squire's heavy tread without, and his loud voice a little louder than usual. She was, indeed, a very nervous, easily alarmed lady; and the one personal luxury she allowed herself was the occasional attendance of a doctor to prescribe for what was more a mental than a bodily ailment, but which she called neuralgia. Dr Perinet, who knew pretty well how far she contrived to stretch a slender income, and how active she and her niece were in household duties, had a great respect and compassion for Mrs Royston, and pocketed her three-franc fees as demurely as if they had been golden louis. He was quite pleased to be the means of making the family at the old château and the English boarder at the convent acquainted with each other. The former household consisted of four persons when first Lady Flavia began to visit at the mildewed old château—namely, the squire; his patient wife; her niece, Adela Burt, whose father had ruined himself in speculations, and left his daughter penniless to her aunt's care; and Grosse Jeanne, who wore sabots, and was cook, housemaid, and henwife in one.

But eighteen months after Lord Mortlake's daughter had become intimate at the château, a new member was added to the family circle, and it became necessary to supplement Grosse Jeanne's services by hiring a country girl to assist in the housework. Captain Basil Royston, the only son and only child, was coming home from India. This young gentleman came accordingly, and seemed in no hurry to go away again. His occupation, indeed, was gone, like Othello's, but for reasons less deserving of sympathy. A court-martial at Poonah had expressed a very decided opinion on the propriety of expunging the name of Basil Royston from the Army List, and the commander-in-chief had been graciously pleased to give the sentence his heartiest approval. The why and wherefore would entail a long and intricate story, in which cards and billiards, disputed bets, orders on a regimental paymaster, brandy-pawnee, and intimidation of freshly-arrived griffins, were curiously mixed up together. Three or four names beside that of the captain received no great accession of honour from the light thus thrown on these queer transactions, and there were those who called Royston 'poor fellow,' and insisted that he had been made a scapegoat of in behalf of others whose influence was greater than his. But at anyrate, the black-sheep was driven from the flock; and Captain

Basil Royston, with no right to his military designation, came back to kick his heels at the château; and the place seemed doubly dreary when the young man's handsome sullen face was seen perpetually about it.

Had Captain Royston been at his father's house when first Lady Flavia's pale cheeks and spiritless air warned the experienced doctor that some remedy not in the pharmacopœia was necessary, Dr Perinet would have looked further afield for the means of amusing her. The old French physician would not have reconciled it to himself to introduce a girl, at her susceptible age, and with her large expectations, into a family that numbered among its members such a good-looking idler as that ex-captain of Lancers. As it was, when the doctor paid one of his rare professional calls to Mrs Royston, and found Lady Flavia and her young friend singing a duet to the accompaniment of the jingling old piano, and saw Basil Royston's tawny moustaches and handsome gloomy countenance a few yards off, as their owner leaned indolently against the mantel-piece, beating time to the music with the lash of his frayed riding-whip, the doctor's gray eyebrows rose into an arch of surprise; and the Superior received a quiet hint, that perhaps it would be safer if her young pupil's visits to the château were rather fewer and briefer for the future.

The Superior was not slow to take the hint. She was horror-struck at the very idea of an attachment springing up between a boarder of hers and a young man, even if the former had but a face for her fortune, and the latter were rich as Rothschild, and virtuous enough to deserve the Monthyon prize. But between the only daughter of the Earl of Mortlake—*une héritière, quoi!*—and a *méchant garçon* of a cashiered officer without a *sou*, it was atrocious. Dr Perinet had some trouble to prevent the scandalised Carmelite from insisting on a total breaking off of the acquaintance between Miladi Clare and the Roystons; as it was, Lady Flavia was much less frequently to be seen beyond the convent walls than before; and on various pretexts, the Superior contrived to keep her from being so much with the family at the château as she had previously been. Indeed, the convent was less irksome to Lord Mortlake's daughter than heretofore, for there was now another English boarder, a sweet-tempered girl named Amy Ford, and those two had become fast friends.

The year in which Miss Ford became a pupil at the Carmelite convent was the last of Lord Mortlake's life. Sickening of a mortal disorder, the natural yearnings of fatherly affection struggled hard with prejudice and habit, and prevailed. Lord Mortlake wrote with a feeble hand to announce to the Lady-Superior that he desired to see his daughter, should his malady increase, and begged that she would hold herself in readiness to start for England at short notice, and that an escort might be found for her to travel with. The Superior was puzzled, and asked her confessor and her physician for advice. The confessor shrugged up his shoulders. Perfidious Albion was only a geographical expression to him; but he had no great fancy for crossing the sea personally, and for carrying his own shovel-hat, and *soutane*, and little blue collar among irreverent islanders, to convoy a heretic young lady. The doctor could not be spared. He suggested M. Royston, *père*, as a

proper protector on the journey for his young compatriot; and the Superior was obliged to consent. Old Brand Royston being appealed to, expressed his willingness to take charge of Lady Flavia on the journey to Harbledown. His outlawry had never been reversed, but his creditors were dead, or had lost sight of him. He had no fears of arrest, and was willing to go on the understanding that all expenses were to be defrayed, as was reasonable, by Lord Mortlake.

Another letter came, not from the earl, but from his medical adviser. It was hastily penned, and very short, but it urged on Lady Flavia the necessity of hurrying to Harbledown, if she would see her father alive. This letter reached the convent late in the day; and it was arranged that Lady Flavia should sleep for one night at the château, past the gates of which the diligence clattered and rumbled daily on its way to the nearest railway-station; and that early on the following morning she should, under Mr Royston's care, set off for Paris, and thence to England. Late on a Wednesday evening, Lady Flavia Clare and the trunks that contained her wardrobe were duly conveyed to the Château des Roches. This was the first stage of a journey which ended in the arrival of the young girl with her surly protector at Harbledown, six hours after the Earl of Mortlake had breathed his last.

CHAPTER V.—DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

The funeral of Francis, Earl of Mortlake, had taken place after the usual decorous delay of nearly two weeks from the time when the weary eyes of the master of so much of this world's goods had closed in their last slumber. The will had been read. It was short and simple. Beyond a few legacies and pensions to old servants and hangers-on of the family, its provisions were very few. It gave to 'my dear and only child Flavia, whom I beg sometimes to think kindly of me,' all that Lord Mortlake had it in his power to give. Harbledown, with the Devonshire and Somersetshire property, followed the title as of right, and the new earl was absolute master of these. But Melshot Friars and Cupley Lees, with messuages and tenements, farms, free-warren and manor rights, three advowsons, a colliery, and many fair acres of fat Leicestershire pasture and sound Sussex arable, were given to Lady Flavia Clare. So were sixty-three thousand pounds of funded property, the savings of those sad but not useless years during which the Timon of Harbledown had shut his doors against his equals. The banished and neglected child was a great heiress now.

Lady Flavia was under age, and it was necessary that her large possessions should be vested, for the time being, in the hands of trustees. These trustees were Sir Wilbraham Alleyne, almost the only one of Lord Mortlake's early friends with whom he had kept up some intercourse, and a well-known London banker, Mr Cottrell. These gentlemen were to pay to Lady Flavia a large annual sum by way of an allowance, with authority to add to its amount as they saw fit; and the whole property was to be at her disposal on her coming of age or marrying, on condition of her guardian's approval, should she marry while still in the period of legal infancy. But the strangest part of the will had reference to that very guardian. Power was given

to Lady Flavia to select whatever person she might please to fill this important office, on condition, however, that her choice should be ratified by 'my kinsman and successor John, Lord Hythe, whom I earnestly entreat to be a better friend to my poor motherless girl than I have proved myself a father.' But within all reasonable limits, Lady Flavia's selection of a personal guardian and place of residence was to be left to her own unbiassed decision.

So said the will; and though the experienced London solicitor who had drawn it, and who attended with it at the business meeting which followed the funeral, had some doubts as to whether the latter provision would 'stand,' were the Lord Chancellor to be moved upon the subject, it was soon made quite clear that the new earl had not the slightest intention of contesting the point, or of in any way deviating from the spirit of his predecessor's written prayer.

The object of so much tardy solicitude, looking prettier and sligher than ever in her deep mourning garb, sat alone in her room, when there was a quick low tap at the door, and her maid entered. She had a maid by this time, thanks to Mrs Benson's sense of what was fitting, for her own tastes and habits had not caused her to feel the want of such a functionary as strongly as the housekeeper did on her account. However, the new maid came in with rather a scared look.

'Mr Royston sent me, my lady, to say he is waiting to see your ladyship. He says there must be some mistake, for Lady Mortlake told him you were coming down to speak to him, an hour ago.'

Lady Flavia looked up from her book. 'How absurd! I forgot all about him. Where is Mr Royston?'

The abigail made answer that the gentleman was in the library, that a carriage was waiting at the door to take him away to the Chartley Railway Station, and that he seemed very impatient. 'He says he has lost one train already,' added the maid in conclusion, in a tone of mingled pertness and alarm, for there was something in Brand's thundering voice and fierce eye, when he was incensed, that few servants could encounter without flinching; and Simmons, London-bred as she was, had quaked at the prospect of a second meeting with one whom she afterwards described in the still-room as an arbitrary person and black slave-driver. However Simmons was spared this ordeal, for her young mistress went quietly down to the library, where Brand Royston was pacing to and fro with long strides, evidently in the worst possible temper. The library was a fine large room, with its towering rows of well-stored bookshelves; and many a man in the ex-squire's case could have whiled away an hour or so agreeably enough among the treasures it contained. But Mr Royston's reading was limited to the occasional study of the Racing Calendar and Stud Book, and to the sporting newspapers; and he had passed the last sixty minutes or so in frequent comparisons of his watch with the clock on the chimney-piece, and in angry glances through the great windows at the gravelled drive where one of the earl's carriages stood ready to carry him off to Chartley, the nearest point on the railway. A milder man than he might have been provoked at the delay.

Mr Royston wheeled round as he heard the sound of the opening door, and his brow was dark, and his voice harsh, as he said: 'Here have

I been left to cool my heels this hour and a quarter, by Jove, and you care no more than— Now you *are* come, my Lady Flavia, we'd better come to some understanding at once, you and I.'

Nothing, not even age and past kindness, could warrant the assumption of such a tone as this, and indeed Mr Royston's voice was nearly as gruff, and his demeanour as overbearing, as when he terrified the maid a few minutes before. But there was no trace of terror or annoyance in Lady Flavia's clear blue eyes as she approached the angry giant.

'So very sorry to have kept you waiting, of course,' she said, in a tone that seemed but half serious; 'you must forgive me, dear sir. Mine is not a common position, and I have so much to occupy my thoughts just now;' and she sighed, while the long dark lashes fell like a veil over her candid blue eyes, and rested almost on her soft cheek.

'You don't expect me to believe in your grief and sorrow, I suppose? By the Lord Harry, that won't go down with *me*,' said Royston coarsely. The dark eyelashes rose abruptly, and for a single instant the blue eyes flashed with a cold angry sparkle like the glitter of a half-unsheathed sword. But there was nothing but childlike innocence in those pure eyes as they opened wide on the rough squire before them, while their owner shook her jetty curls back with a half-playful gesture, and made answer.

'Grief! You see, Mr Royston, my dear father and I were almost strangers to one another. I was taken from him so early—at six years old, you know—or eight, I forget which—otherwise my sorrow would have been deeper, naturally.'

And as the last words were spoken, this strange speech was wound up by a little peal of silvery laughter—very low, but very clear; not a mirthful laugh, or one that suggested mirthful thoughts to the listeners, and yet there was an evident enjoyment in its fairy chime. Brand Royston's bull-eyes opened in a dull but wrathful stare of no counterfeit astonishment. He looked sullenly down at the lovely little face that looked up at him, and by some instinct that he could not account for, he recoiled a step, and the blood rushed from his flushed face to his quick-beating heart.

'I don't see your little game, my lady,' he muttered between his clenched teeth, but so low that it seemed impossible that Lady Flavia could catch the sound. She was the first to resume the conversation.

'Must you really leave us to-day, Mr Royston? Do you know I feel half as if I were deserted here, half inclined to beg you to take me back to the tiresome old convent, and Sœur Nanon, and Sœur Christine, and Madame Neville with her eternal "de la sagesse, mesdemoiselles." After all, I am a stranger here, and'—

Brand Royston broke in here with a half-smothered oath and a mighty stroke of one of his heavy fists in the palm of the other muscular hand. 'Let us talk sense, will you, madam?' said he, involuntarily raising his voice. 'You seem to wish to throw your old friends overboard altogether; but, by George, it won't do.'

The squire had a terrible voice—one of those to which the nerves of the ear are forced to quiver and vibrate; and few persons were stout-hearted enough to listen to its menacing accents unmoved.

But there was not a shadow of fear in the girlish face that looked up at him, while the fresh young voice said in rather a graver tone than before: 'Mr Royston, you forget yourself. I must beg you not to speak to me again in such a manner; and yet'—and here a pretty smile of forgiveness beamed out over the fair little face—'we are such good friends, and I have so many pleasant recollections of your hospitality at the dear old chateau treasured in my memory, that I wish us to continue friends always. Don't be vexed with me.'

And she put out her little white hand with a timid little gesture of reconciliation that would have bewitched any man who was not a brute. Brand Royston must surely have been a brute, for he made no sign of taking the playfully-offered hand; on the contrary, his face grew nearly black with suppressed passion, and he took three or four hasty strides up and down the room before he could calm himself sufficiently to resume the conversation. At last he planted himself full in front of Lady Flavia, and said in a voice that he struggled to keep down to a low pitch: 'I sent for you to speak on business. You know that that will give you power to choose your own guardian. What do you mean to do?'

Lady Flavia looked fixedly at him, but gave him no answer. Almost choking with rage, the squire forced himself to frame the query more politely: 'Will you, Lady Flavia, oblige me by informing me of your intention with respect to the selection of your guardian? Has my Lord spoken to you on the subject yet?'

'He has,' answered the girl, and her colour mounted a very little to her lovely face as she spoke, and her eyes became more brilliant as their glance, with an inexplicable, almost a mocking look, watched every movement of the squire.

'Have you chosen me?' blurted out Royston savagely.

'I have chosen Lord Mortlake himself. The earl and countess came to me early to-day, and most kindly offered me a home with them at Harbledown. They remarked, what was very true, that I could not live alone—a little lonely creature such as I am—in either of my own two houses; and the earl very good-naturedly said, he could not help looking on me as the rightful mistress of this house—my poor papa's, you know'—

But here Brand Royston, with flashing eyes, strode forward, and rudely grasped Lady Flavia's delicate wrist between his iron fingers.

'Have you dared to do this?' he asked in a deep tone, like the distant roar of a lion; 'have you dared— But you shall unsay the words; you shall, I say. You shall go to Lord Mortlake, and'—

His voice had been waxing louder and louder, in spite of himself and all his efforts to be prudent, and now its threatening sounds seemed actually to bruise the delicate ear, as the gripe of his crushing fingers was bruising the delicate flesh of the listener. But there was no shrinking in her attitude; and she had the courage to smile as she interrupted his furious speech with: 'I am afraid I must indeed go to Lord Mortlake, if you will not be so very kind as to release me. There are servants in the hall outside. Perhaps I had better send word to the earl that I must really ask him to be present at this very odd interview, unless— Thank you! But how you have hurt my wrist. There will be a great black bruise; and I shall have to

tell all sorts of fibs, Mr Royston, to keep your eccentric behaviour from the world at large; and Lady Flavia looked piteously down at the hand which Royston had let drop, and on the tender flesh of which the livid marks of his rough clutch were already perceptible. Then she laughed, with a careless toss of her little head, and shook back her curls as she added: 'You put me in mind of the savage baron—what was his name?—something beginning with L—oh, Lindesay, Lindesay of the Byres, who was so cruel as to squeeze Queen Mary's arm with his iron gauntlet, to make her sign some silly paper or other. But Mary was frightened, and she signed it: I would not have done so, Mr Royston—never, never, never!'

The great heat-drops, wrung forth by fierce inward emotion, were beginning to stand thickly on Royston's brow. He dashed them away with the back of his heavy hand, and twice he tried to speak, but his voice died away without the utterance of an articulate sound. When he spoke at last, it was in a hoarse accent, like that of one half-strangled, that he said: 'Remember!' and shook his lifted forefinger with a strange gesture of menace, that seemed rather suggested by recollections of the past, and bodings of future evil, than to imply a common-place threat. The squire's flushed face was pale enough now, and his breath came short and painfully. Whatever his last speech might imply, it was obvious that Lady Flavia understood it perfectly, for again the cold angry glitter, as of steel suddenly bared, shone for an instant in her blue eyes.

'Remember!' she answered, in a low sibilant tone, more like the hiss of a snake than anything that could have been expected from those rosy young lips—'remember! As if it was likely that I should ever forget!' And then followed a burst of that silvery laughter that seemed peculiar to this fairy-like little creature—tiny elfin merriment, that somehow made the hearers sad without their knowing why. This rare little peal of laughter seemed to strike Brand Royston like a blow. He gasped as if for breath; and there was something very like terror in his face as he walked with unsteady steps to the window, threw it open, and leaned out, letting the fresh air blow freely on his heated forehead. A long pause succeeded. Mr Royston's face was averted; but Lady Flavia had dropped into a chair, as if fatigued, and her slender fingers were trifling with the malachite and mother-of-pearl paper-knives and other toys on the table beside her, while her expression was that of a well-bred hostess who waits till a tiresome visitor shall relieve her of his presence. 'At last the squire turned round, and advanced towards her. A great change had come over him. He looked dogged and ferocious still; but the audacity of his bearing had been replaced by an awkward sort of timidity. His voice was studiously subdued, too, as he said: 'I beg your pardon. I am rather rough and hasty; and—and I am not used to be thwarted, as you know. Don't let us quarrel.'

'Now you are my good kind Mr Royston again!' said the girl with a bright smile of forgiveness. 'My pardon is given as soon as asked. Let us part good friends, as we were in old days, when you and your kind family were so indulgent to the poor little lonely school-girl; and come again and see us at Christmas, and bring dear Mrs Royston. I'll take care Lady Mortlake shall invite you.'

Brand Royston's face would have been a study for Fuseli. His colour went and came in quick gushes, so that his face was red and purple, and almost black, as the dark blood rushed surging into it, and then ghastly white, as fear seemed to conquer rage. He had gnawed his lip till it bled. His mighty right hand was alternately clenched and unclenched, and his staring eyes were blood-shot; but with all this formidable show of passion, the fiercer for its being kept down, there mingled a stronger current of fear—the sort of fear that a tiger might feel for a little gilded snake of deadliest venom, on whose coils the lord of the jungle was afraid to set his foot. The squire felt himself cowed by the presence of a harder nature than his own.

Very quietly, almost mechanically, as a dull pupil repeats a lesson got by rote, did he utter the words: 'I am going now, Lady Flavia. If you have any last words'—

He paused, choking, and she filled up the gap, speaking with graceful ease: 'Only my love to the dear ones at the château, and my respectful compliments to the Superior, should you see Dr Perinet soon. I mean to send the good doctor something pretty from London, as a surprise. Do you think a gold snuff-box would—' But I see you are impatient. Have you taken leave of my cousins yet, the earl and countess?'

'To be sure! I wished them good-bye more than an hour ago,' said Brand, breaking into something of his old tone; 'but that is not to the purpose. Cannot you be open and above-board, my lady?'

Again that musical little laugh that seemed to freeze Mr Royston's blood, while Lady Flavia archly smiled in his face as she rejoined: 'Now, what does that mean? I dare say you will think me very stupid for not understanding those nautical metaphors, but it can't be helped. *Must* you go, Mr Royston? Ah! there is one of the footmen coming in with some tiresome message from the coachman about the train, or the horses, or my Lord's orders, or something.—Yes, I thought so'—as the servant entered and civilly mentioned the fact, that there was hardly time to reach Chartley before the passage of the 4.45 express. 'I must come and see you off, dear sir. My love to all at home. Remember me most kindly to dearest Mrs Royston and dearest Adela; and give my best wishes to Captain Basil, and—— I do so hope I shall not have made you miss the train.'

And as the carriage drove rapidly off, bearing away Mr Royston, cowed, miserable, and inwardly chafing, the last sight he saw was that graceful little figure, in deep mourning, standing on the stately flight of steps, and the last sound he heard was that ringing little silver laugh, that seemed to have power to tame his rugged nature, as the snake-charmer tames the serpent. What was the secret, vaguely shadowed forth, of any link between these two beings, so incongruous, so mutually repellent, yet whose conduct, but for the ineffaceable memories of a past, to which neither cared to refer, would have been inexplicable? Time alone could solve that riddle. At any rate, such was the manner in which Brand Royston, sometime of Royston Hall, took his leave of Harbledown and its occupants; and thus did Lady Flavia Clare become a permanent inmate of her kinsman's home.

CHAPTER VI.—LORD HYPHE.

The new Earl and Countess of Mortlake had four daughters, but only one son, now Lord Hythe, but who had for some years been known in the House of Commons as the Honourable Augustus Clare, M.P. for Starvington, a bleak little Wiltshire borough that had escaped reform. It might have done worse, however, than return Mr Clare, who was a steady working-member, if not a brilliant politician. Lord Hythe was about thirty years old, a comely, manly Englishman, sensible, honest, and earnest, a capital man on committees, a safe vote, not to be led away by pique or crotchet, and exactly the sort of speaker who is held worth his weight in gold at agricultural meetings and mechanics' institutes. He had but lately arrived at Harbledown, much to the delight of his mother and sisters, whose idol he was; and indeed, if praise and deference in the family circle could have spoiled Lord Hythe's nature, spoiled it would have been in no slight degree. But all the flattery in the world could not have made a coxcomb of the member for Starvington, and he shot partridges, read blue-books, and returned the visits of the county magnates with equal calmness. It was not until September that he reached Harbledown.

Of Lord Mortlake's four daughters, two were still in the school-room, but two were grown up, and very well grown too. They had been left in London, under the care of a cousin, a certain Mrs Archibald Clare, when their parents were somewhat suddenly called down to the west to attend their dying kinsman; and, the season being over, they had gladly come down early in August. Lady Caroline and Lady Julia, the two eldest, were a brace of large young women, tall, light-haired, and possessed of pink healthy faces and equable tempers. They had been 'out' for two and three seasons respectively, and were spinsters still; but they felt no bitterness or mortification at seeing so many of their contemporaries married before them. That their turn would come, they never doubted, and they were in no hurry for the orange blooms and the Honiton lace, sure as they were that their aristocratic names would sooner or later be inscribed in the vestry-books of St George's, Hanover Square. But almost all their sex, from the child, vain of her white sash and well-starched frock, to the grandmother bending in her elbow-chair, have a turn for match-making, and so it was in this case.

Lady Caroline and Lady Julia often disputed which was the first to suggest how delightful it would be if darling Flavia and Hythe, as they were beginning to call their brother, could be brought to like each other. But to whichever of the sisters the bright original idea was due, it was hailed with acclamation, and Lady Mortlake smiled upon it with maternal approbation. Why not? It would be an excellent match, looking at it merely from a worldly point of view. Such a marriage would reunite the former possessions of the Clare family; and when Hythe should succeed as ninth earl to the pearl-pointed coronet, he would be a richer man, and thus more worthy of marquises, Irish vicerealty, and presidencies of the council, than any of his predecessors. Then Hythe was such a dear fellow, so clever, good, wise, prudent, so excellent a pilot and protector for a charming little giddy thing, such as Flavia, in the perilous

voyage of life; and Flavia was such a sweet creature, that if ever marriages are really made in heaven, surely, so the sisters thought, this would be one of them. It is very probable that had Lady Flavia been less splendidly dowered than she was, Lady Caroline and Lady Julia might have been less eager to hail her as their sister-in-law. But they were not so much influenced by mercenary motives as might be supposed. They had taken a great fancy to the lovely little orphaned cousin whom they had found, looking so pretty and delicate in her deep mourning, at Harbledown. They knew enough of her story to be prepared from the first to sympathise with, and be kind to, this poor lonely little maid, who had been the innocent scapegoat for the sins of others. But they were surprised at finding how very graceful, how sprightly and spirited, was the young kinswoman whom they had set down, on first hearing of her, as a raw school-girl fresh from backboards and music-lessons. But this notion was a thoroughly mistaken one. Lady Flavia, hospitably welcomed and made much of, had been like a flower expanding its delicate petals to the genial generous sunshine. Her early silence and reserve had thawed as thin ice melts at the warm breath of spring. It would not have been natural that she, who had but an indistinct recollection of her father, should have been long overcome by grief at his loss; and her gentle sorrow, which seemed more like the overflow of a true and tender heart, than the deep-seated regret that in such a case was hardly possible, only served to lend her an additional charm. Gradually the bright smile on her face became more frequent, her youthful spirits rose; and by the first week in October, the convent-bred girl was the pet and spoiled darling of the household.

Lord Hythe smiled incredulously when first, on his arrival at Harbledown, his sisters combined to fill his ears with the praises of their new friend. He knew well enough that young-lady friendships are apt to grow like the gourd of the prophet, and to wither, sometimes, as rapidly, and had no very high expectations with regard to this new relative. He came down to dinner, anticipating that the family phœnix would prove either a bread-and-butter miss of the awkward red-knuckled British type, or a chattering self-conscious damsel of the French pattern. But the sight of so much loveliness—for Lady Flavia looked far prettier than when we first saw her, pale and weary, on the threshold of her unfamiliar home—surprised him, and the girl's manner perplexed him excessively. He was not a lady's-man, was more at home in a committee-room than in an opera-box, but he was no fool, and had some knowledge of women's ways. That knowledge was at fault now. There was something about Lady Flavia Clare that he could not fathom.

'I've seen every variety of prude, flirt, and coquette, stupid good women, clever good women, and those who were good without being clever or stupid, but never any one in the least like *her*,' said Lord Hythe to himself as he strolled beside the trout-stream that came splashing and bubbling down from the high purple moors whose bold chain overhangs Harbledown Park. 'I can't make her out. She has more sense in her little finger, I'm certain, than Carry and Julia put together, and yet she lets them treat her like a child or a plaything. She has a brilliant fancy, and never

talks platitudes, yet she is not a bit of a blue. I never can tell whether she is serious or joking, with all that playfulness of hers, and that laugh—it's a very musical laugh—but I think I had rather my wife should be less of an enigma. Eh, Leo, my boy?' And Lord Hythe stooped and patted the head of his great dog, the usual companion of his walks. A very fine and a very faithful dog was Leo, and his master insisted on bringing him constantly into the family circle, rather to the distress of the countess, who was constitutionally timid, and never could quite reconcile herself to the animal's presence. Indeed, none of Lord Hythe's near relations had ever felt quite comfortable when in company with the big tawny brute, yellow as a lion, and nearly large enough for one, six-and-thirty inches at the shoulder, and possessing the black muzzle, the heavy tail, strong paws, deep chest, and solemn dignity of the pure old Pyrenean breed of wolf-dogs. A patrician of the canine race was Leo, very grave and majestic, never seeking a quarrel with man or beast, and rarely uttering that mighty bark, at the sound of which others of his species slunk off trembling to their kennels. But for all that, and although Leo treated his master's friends with distinguished politeness, there was something in the expression of the dog's dark eyes, deep-set, and glowing like carbuncles, that said *Noli me tangere* as plainly as a human tongue could have done, and no one ever patted the noble brute otherwise than respectfully, and in a half-apologetic manner.

But here, wonder of wonders, came out another trait in Lady Flavia's apparently incongruous character: she alone of the household refused to be afraid of Leo. In spite of all well-meant warnings, in spite of suppressed feminine screams from the young ladies, she would have her way. When Leo lay stretched on the hearth-rug, lazily blinking at the cold grate, and perhaps dreaming of winter and its bright fires, Lady Flavia would seat herself on a low stool beside the dog, twine her arms round his neck, and caress the huge brute as fearlessly and familiarly as if he had been the meekest of lap-dogs. A pretty sight it was, as Lord Hythe often owned to himself, that of this slight delicate fairy with her slender arms wound round Leo's brawny neck, and her silken curls falling in ebon masses over the great hound's shaggy yellow coat. But there was one feature in the case that could not but strike the young man, a keener observer than his mother and sisters. If Lady Flavia were not afraid of Leo, which was obvious, it was almost equally plain that Leo was afraid of Lady Flavia. It seemed absurd, but it was true. To his master's practised eye, the mighty dog never failed to shew signs of fear, and of a sort of scared subjection, while those white little hands were tenderly stroking his massive head, and those blue girlish eyes were bent on his. Then, as the dog cowered down submissively, the dead earl's daughter would look up with her bright glance and her ringing elfin laugh.

'Leo and I are very good friends, and understand each other quite well,' she would say in that playful tone which always puzzled Lord Hythe as to whether some deeper meaning did not lurk beneath the words than they seemed to convey. 'You should give him to me, and then we could walk about the moors together, like Una and the Lion, you know. Give a paw, Leo. Good dog!'

Leo never condescended to give his broad forepaw to any one but his master, Lady Flavia excepted; but there was a spell in her voice and look that the creature obeyed at once.

'Is she a sorceress, then, and has she bewitched you, old fellow?' asked Lord Hythe as he walked along, looking down at his dog as it gravely paced beside him. 'Or is she really the Fairy Queen she looks? Yes, it would be a very good match, as my mother says; and the girl is sweetly pretty, and she has Cupley Lees and Melshot Friars stitched to her apron; but—but I had rather think twice about it, though I am sure I could give no reason for saying so.'

THE NEW YEAR.

FAREWELL, Old Year; a length of pictured days
Thou foldest up; thy service is at end.
Retire, obscurely fading in the haze
Which moments falling thick between us send.

The earth is covered o'er with cold white snow;
Something between her and the stars is gone;
For their large eyes a clearer splendour shew,
As if some earnest thought within them shone.

Some unseen being under heaven's arch
Hath passed, and dropped his trailing robes on earth;
More clean than whitest ermine ere his march,
How soon they lose their purity of birth!

The chapel's long-drawn floor, whence sculptured shafts
Rise sudden upward, branching o'er the roof,
A sigh along it to the altar wafts;
Is it the wind, or Love that sits aloof?

Love, the fine Spirit that was left to men
When his dear Master entered the bright cloud
That hid the ascent from all but angel ken—
Doth Love sigh lonely in the world's great crowd?

Pride curls her lip like ocean's beauteous shells,
And folds the purple round her graceful limbs,
And saith: 'Hath faith in Christ more generous spells
Than mine, whose golden round the soul enrims?'

I muse before thy face, respondent Pride;
Swanlike between thy ruffled wings thou liftest
A head so noble! seeing wisdom chide,
And Christ disdain thy ornament the swiftest.

Hast thou in subtlety thus woven in
Across our nature thy gold glittering threads,
To claim for them the same bright origin
With what was left divine among its shreds?

Thou art the nearest to a form of light,
And, like the star that hovers near the sun,
Dost court our nobler being: yet the night
Claims thy full orb; the day-spring thou dost shun.

New every blade of grass the snow hath spared
Bristles with crystal bolts from fairy bows
That Frost among his tiny sprites hath shared,
Where'er her ensigns green the country shews.

Old Year, the whizzing arrow oft hath sped
Past thy quick ear, that made a bosom smart;
Thine eye the lampless page of hate hath read,
Hath marked bright love fall poisoned from the heart.

Old Year, I well believe thou hast seen tears
Beauteous with light, warm motions of the soul;
Sweet charities with toil from fancy's spheres
Silvering some wave that black to view doth roll.

Saint Mary's tower standing in the skies,
Wrapped round with starry night, resounds the bells,
Whence music string by string unchanging flies,
And on itself rejoicing swells.

Old Year, as in the flower's brilliant cup
Lurks Autumn, as the rainbows braid the storms,
So this glad sound a sadness foldeth up;
What breaks in joy a solemn cadence forms.

Farewell, Old Year; an hour is moving near
Whose wondrous dome shall overarch the soul;
There will thine ancestors with Thee appear
Accusers, when the Judgment-gates unroll.

We have an Advocate, the Son of God;
And though our storm-lashed hope rock to and fro,
Uprooted may it never strew the sod,
But strengthening, ring in ring, to heaven grow!

Hast thou departed? New Year, art Thou come?
No step of thine imprints the silent snow;
The air Thou lean'st upon is still and dumb;
Ye have not ta'en or giv'n a thing I know.

The chapel clock strikes two! the voice of Time
Hath struck two hours from thy rosary;
Behind the earth's dark shoulder 'gins to climb
The first bright herald of thy company.

'Tis the first day! they watch around the place;
And suddenly the stone is rolled away;
The glory of the Lord upon thy face
Blazes effulgence! Christ is risen to-day!

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